



File Code: 1950

Date: September 22, 2017

## **RE: SF STILLAGUAMISH VEGETATION PROJECT OBJECTION PERIOD**

The Darrington Ranger District, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest has prepared a final Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact for the SF Stillaguamish Vegetation Project. The draft decision is now subject to a 45-day objection period prior to final decision.

The Draft Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact (DN-FONSI) for the project is available for review. This document as well as other related documents are available for review on the project website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48837> and at the Darrington Ranger District office, 1405 Emens Ave. North, Darrington, WA 98214. Note: On the Forest project website the Final EA is located under the Analysis tab, and the DN-FONSI under the Decision tab, along with the legal notice.

**Summary of Draft Decision:** The draft decision proposes to implement Alternative 2B, and provides rationale for that decision. This alternative would commercially harvest trees on approximately 2,160 to 3,600 acres of the SF Stillaguamish River drainage. An additional 1,060 acres would be considered for non-commercial thinning. The selected alternative would implement connected actions for vegetation, fish and wildlife, recreation, roads, and fuels. The Selected Alternative 2B differs from Alternative 2 as described in the Draft EA, in the following ways:

- Additional visual buffer was added along the Heather Lake Trail
- Reduction of non-commercial thinning acres to stands where non-commercial thinning is most likely to be operationally successful within reasonable costs of treatment (1,060 acres)
- There are changes in temporary road construction with a projected 3-5 miles of new temporary road to be constructed in order to avoid reconstruction of previous temporary roads in unstable locations and to better meet current logging systems.
- There are changes in commercial thinning acres with approximately 330 acres of stands dropped from commercial thinning treatment. Stands were dropped due to three stands were found to have trees >80 years of age, other stands had wetlands and overlapped with fish critical habitat. Other portions of stands are being dropped to retain high snag numbers (root-rot pockets) and stands having desired understory vegetation diversity. There are 330 acres dropped and 241 acres of optional treatment stands added, depending on stand conditions at the time of the thinning sale preparation. These stands were added to contribute to meeting desired priority habitat suitability for old growth associated species. The additional stands are within forest stand types associated with spotted owl and marbled murrelet nesting habitat, and would contribute to future large contiguous blocks of suitable nesting habitat as well as providing wildlife habitat connectivity.

- There are minor changes in road maintenance levels due to clarifications during continued field reconnaissance, with the potential for an additional 2.5 miles of road decommissioned with Alternative 2B.

**Location of project:** The project area includes 65,000 acres of National Forest System lands within the South Fork Stillaguamish watershed. The project is located in Township 29 North to Township 31 North, Range 7 East to Range 11 East; Willamette Meridian; Snohomish County, Washington.

**Objection Process:** The project is now subject to pre-decisional administrative review under 36 CFR 218 subpart B (objection process). Objections will only be accepted from those individuals or organizations who have previously submitted specific written comments during a designated opportunity for comment (36 CFR 218.5). Objections must be based on previously submitted, specific and timely written comments regarding the proposed project and attributed to the objector, unless the issue is based on new information that arose after the opportunities for comment.

Objections must include (36 CFR 218.8(d)): 1) objector's name, address and telephone; 2) signature or other verification of authorship; 3) identify a single lead objector when applicable; 4) project name, Responsible Official name and title, and name of National Forest and/or Ranger District where project will be implemented; 5) description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project; if applicable how the environmental analysis or draft decision violate law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies to resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider, and 6) statement demonstrating the connection between the objection and prior comments. Incorporate documents by reference only as provided for at 36 CFR 218.8(b).

Objections must be submitted to the objection reviewing officer: Forest Supervisor Jamie Kingsbury, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, 2930 Wetmore Ave., Suite 3A, Everett, WA 98201. Objections may be submitted online at the project website, <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=48837> (under the "Get Connected" heading click on "Comment/Object on Project" and follow on-screen instructions for submitting objections), emailed to [objections-pnw-mtbaker-snoqualmie@fs.fed.us](mailto:objections-pnw-mtbaker-snoqualmie@fs.fed.us), faxed to (425) 783-0214, or mailed or hand delivered to the above address 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Mon-Fri except holidays.

Objections including attachments must be filed within 45 days of publication of this legal notice in the Everett Herald. That publication date is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection, those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer as specified in 36 CFR 218.9. Electronic objections must be submitted in .doc, .rtf, .txt, or .pdf format, or as an e-mail message. Emails in other formats or containing viruses cannot be accepted. Emailed objections must include the project name in the subject line. More information on the objection process is in the Draft DN-FONSI. Objections received, including names and addresses of commenters, will be part of the Project Record and available for public review.

For further information, contact project leader Phyllis Reed at (360) 436-2332 or [plreed@fs.fed.us](mailto:plreed@fs.fed.us)



I appreciate your interest in the SF Stillaguamish Vegetation Project and in the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Forbes".

PETER FORBES  
District Ranger

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